SCHISM™
WARRIORS OF
PLASM™
DEFIANT
13
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Lapham 1994

FOOTSOLDIERS OF
ARMAGEDDON
SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE IMAGINARY LIMITS OF REALITY...
...THE TUMULTUOUS REIGN OF THE PROUD AND NOBLE LEADER OF THE LIVING WORLD CALLED THE ORG OF PLASM...
...HAS COME TO AN END.
I COMMAND YOU, ZOMS--RELEASE ME! IMMEDIATELY!
WE CANNOT, LORD LORCA. THE LORD MULE DEMANDS YOUR PRESENCE IN HIS CHAMBERS.
AND HE DOES NOT LIKE TO BE KEPT WAITING!
YOU ARE NO LONGER THE RIGHTFUL RULER OF PLASM, AND NO BEING THAT SERVES THE ORG ANSWERS TO YOU!
STORY BY JIM SHOOTER & DAVID LAPHAM
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LAYOUTS BY DAVID LAPHAM
FINISHED ART BY TIM ELDRED
PAINTED BY OCLAIR
LETTERED BY CLEM ROBINS
EDITED BY PAULINE WEISS

--MY LAST REMAINING ALLIES!

THE PRISONERS ARE SECURE IN THEIR CELLS, SIR. THE TRANCE-FLUID HAS BEEN INTRODUCED AND IS IN EFFECT.

GOOD! OUR NEW EMPEROR WILL HAVE NO TROUBLE FROM LORCA'S OUTWORLDERS!

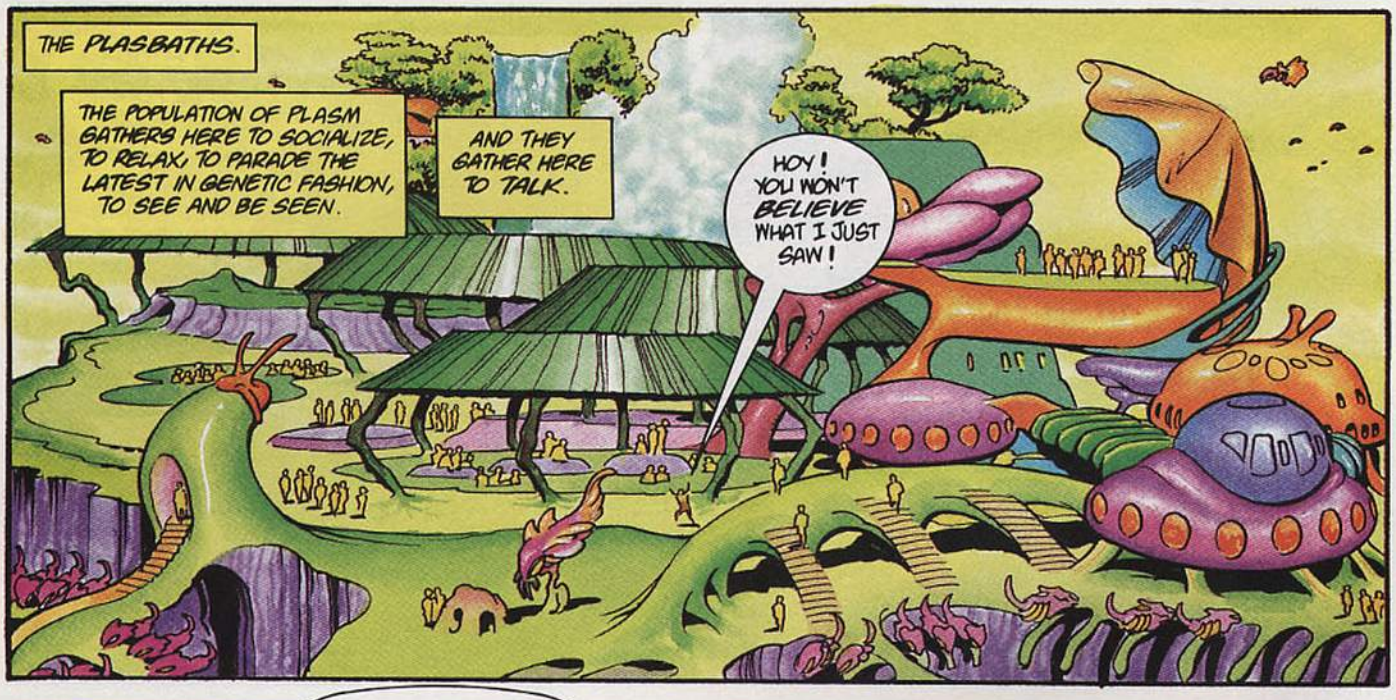
AAAGGHH!

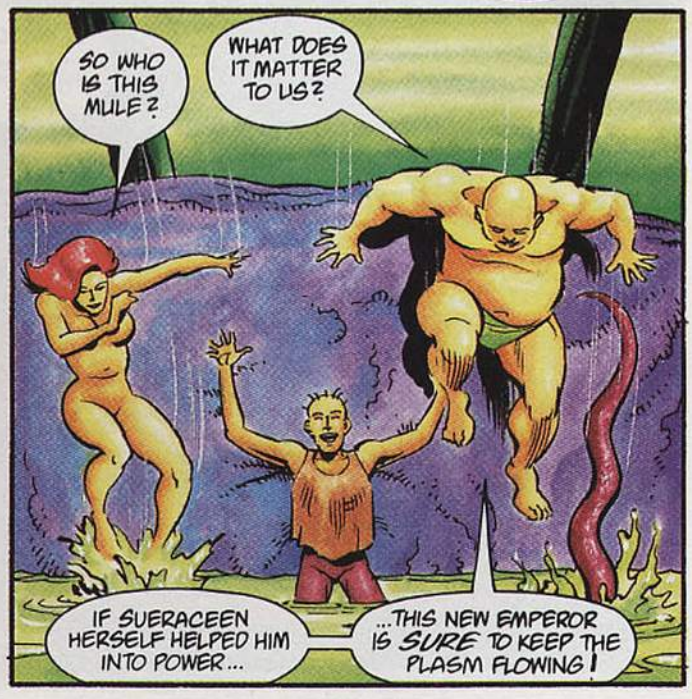
THAT WAS UNWISE, LORCA. EMPEROR MULE WILL NOT BE PLEASED WITH THIS DELAY.
HIGH GORELORD SUERACEEN HERSELF IS ALSO WAITING TO ESCORT YOU TO THE PALACE.

DO NOT TRY TO ESCAPE AGAIN. WE WILL BE FORCED TO MULCH YOU, AND YOUR FRIENDS, IF YOU DO.
ORG'S PHLEGM! IS THAT LORCA?

SO IT'S TRUE! LORCA NO LONGER RULES THE ORG!

I'VE GOT TO TELL EVERYONE!





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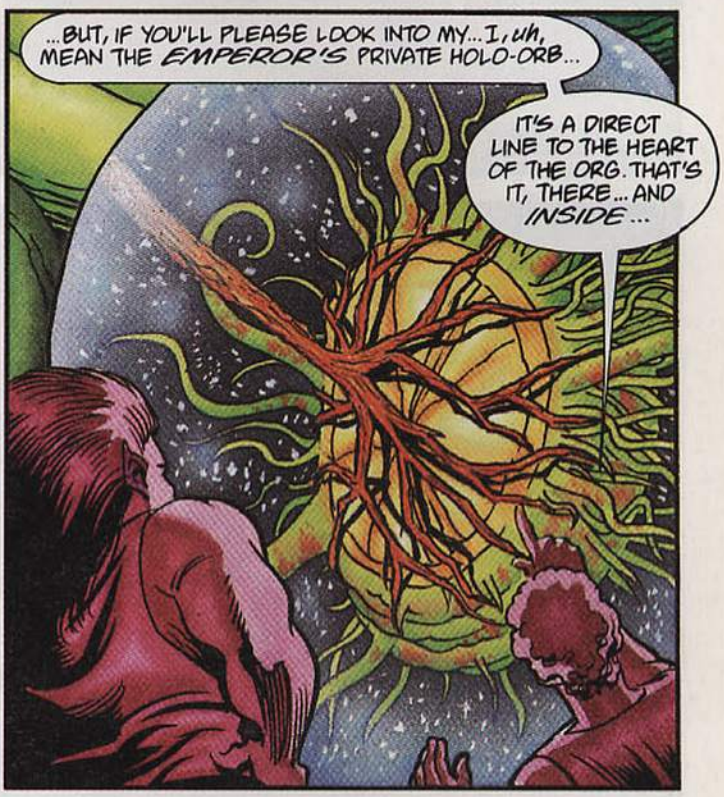
IN THE CENTRUM OF THE EMPEROR...
OKAY, LEMME GET THIS STRAIGHT--YOU RULED THIS PLANET BEFORE THAT BLOND GUY WITH THE CURLS? BUT, PORCH--YOU'RE A WORM!
IT'S, uh, HORTCH, KIND LORD MULE.
WHATEVER.
SO...THIS PLANET'S ALIVE... AND YOU HAVE A RAPPORT WITH IT? LIKE TIMMY WITH LASSIE?

WH-WHO?
I...I USED TO HAVE A RAPPORT...


...BUT, IF YOU'LL PLEASE LOOK INTO MY...I, uh, MEAN THE EMPEROR'S PRIVATE HOLO-ORB...
IT'S A DIRECT LINE TO THE HEART OF THE ORG. THAT'S IT, THERE... AND INSIDE...

...THAT IS WHAT REMAINS OF THE MIND OF THE ORG!
YOU SEE, THE TRUE SOUL OF THE ORG HAS BEEN STOLEN. IT'S A LONG STORY...
BUT... ONLY THE ANIMUS-- THE DARKER, FERAL SIDE OF THE ORG'S ESSENCE REMAINS.
I KNOW WHAT AN ANIMUS IS, SCORCH.
uh... HORTCH, YOUR LORDSHIP.
ANYWAY, NOW THAT THE ORG'S VICIOUS, HUNGRY SIDE IS RUNNING THE SHOW, I CAN'T BEGIN TO COMMUNICATE WITH IT.
NO ONE CAN. HOW DO YOU REASON WITH PURE HUNGER?
WELL, MAYBE YOU CAN'T REASON WITH IT, BUT THAT SNAKE LOOKS LIKE A KINDRED SPIRIT TO ME. I'M SURE WE'LL GET ALONG JUST FINE.

SOME TIME LATER...
EMPEROR MULE! HERE'S THE TRAITOR LORCA, AS YOU ORDERED!
HE'S A BIT DAMAGED. HE RESISTED...AND WE HAD TO BLOW HIS HAND OFF TO SUBDUE HIM.
WELL, PATCH HIM UP. I DON'T WANT HIM BLEEDING TO DEATH. YET. HE MAY HAVE INFO I NEED.
GET LOST, TORCH. I HAVE NO FURTHER USE FOR YOU.
IT'S, uh, HOR...WAIT... I CAN GO?
SEEYA.

SO, LORC...LIFE'S BEEN TOUGH LATELY, huh? FIRST SOMEBODY RIPS OUT THE GOOD PART OF YOUR PLANET'S BRAIN--TURNING IT INTO THE BIGGEST BLOOD-THIRSTY MONSTER IN THE UNIVERSE...
...THEN, SUERACEEN AND THE REST OF YOUR OWN TROOPS TURN AGAINST YOU...
...THEN I COME, KICK YOUR BUTT AND TAKE OVER.

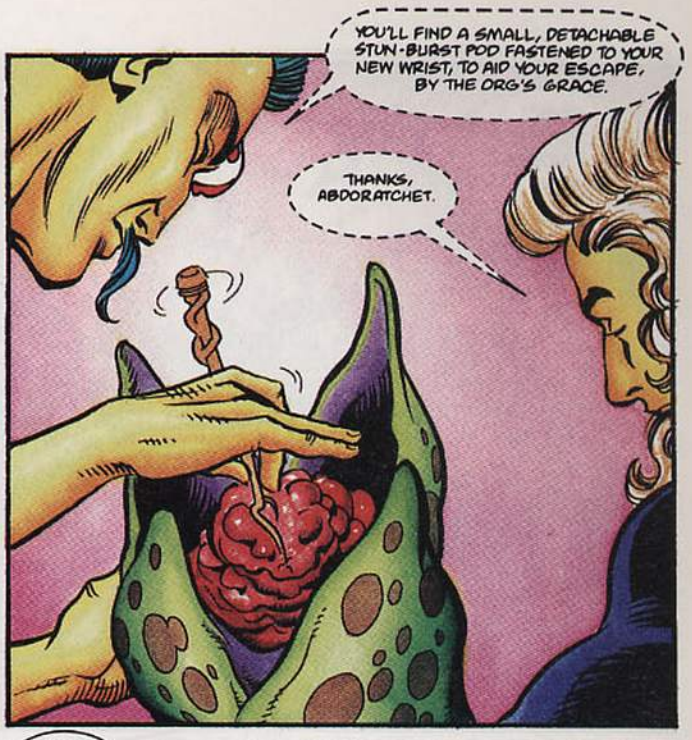
BET IT MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE A FAILURE, DOESN'T IT?

PARDON ME, MY LORDS. SOMEONE NEEDS A NEW HAND GRAFTED ON?
OUR FORMER EMPEROR, ABDORATCHET ...THOUGH I'D RATHER CHOP A FEW MORE THINGS OFF!

WHEN I'M DONE WITH HIM, SWEET SUE...YOU CAN HAVE HIM!

THE NAME IS SUERACEEN. YOU ARE EMPEROR BY RIGHT OF CONQUEST, AND AS HIGH GORELORD, I AM DUTY-BOUND TO SERVE YOU...
...BUT DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK.

RELAX, "HIGH GORE LORD SUERACEEN." GOOD THING I'M IN AN EXPANSIVE MOOD.
THIS IS A GLORIOUS DAY FOR ME!
HOLD STILL, LORCA.


YOU'LL FIND A SMALL, DETACHABLE STUN-BURST POD FASTENED TO YOUR NEW WRIST, TO AID YOUR ESCAPE, BY THE ORG'S GRACE.
THANKS, ABDORATCHET.

TO THINK THAT MERE DAYS AGO, I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW FOR SURE THAT THIS WORLD EXISTED...!
AND NOW, I AM ITS MASTER!
I WOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU... IF YOU PLEASE, THAT IS... "MASTER."
SURE. I'M A BIGTIME OVERLORD OF DEMONS.
ARE YOU FROM EARTH?

YES AND NO.
I COME FROM THE SUBSTRATUM ...A LEVEL OF REALITY UNDERLYING WHAT EARTH PEOPLE THINK IS THE REAL WORLD.
YOUR "ORG" IS A LOT LIKE MY REALM. IN FACT, IT'S A PIECE OF THE SUBSTRATUM THAT GOT CUT OFF SOMEHOW...
...AND BECAME VERY WEIRD.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, MULE.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, SUE. IT'LL ALL BE MOOT, SOON.
YOU SEE, RIGHT NOW, FOR SOME REASON ALL THE LEVELS OF REALITY ARE MERGING...
...AND WITH THIS LIVING WORLD AS MY PERSONAL POWERBASE...

...I'LL SOON RULE... EVERYTHING.
HM...FEELING WELL-ARMED, LORC?

RUN, ABDORATCHET...! HE KNOWS... AHHK!
YAAH!

OWW! PHLEGMSTRINGS! HOW DID HE FIND OUT?
A LITTLE ORG TOLD ME...AND HELPED ME SET IT OFF EARLY.

SEE, I'VE ESTABLISHED RAPPORT WITH THE SNAKE-SPIRIT WHO RUNS THIS PLACE. HE'S MUCH LIKE MY PET DEMONS, ACTUALLY...ONLY BIGGER.

SO...I DON'T REALLY NEED YOU, DO I? SNAKEY WILL SHARE ANY INFO I WANT.

HE'S INTO EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON HERE, IT SEEMS.
TELL YOU WHAT. TAKE HIM AWAY, SUE. DO WHAT YOU WILL WITH HIM. AND...
HAVE FUN.

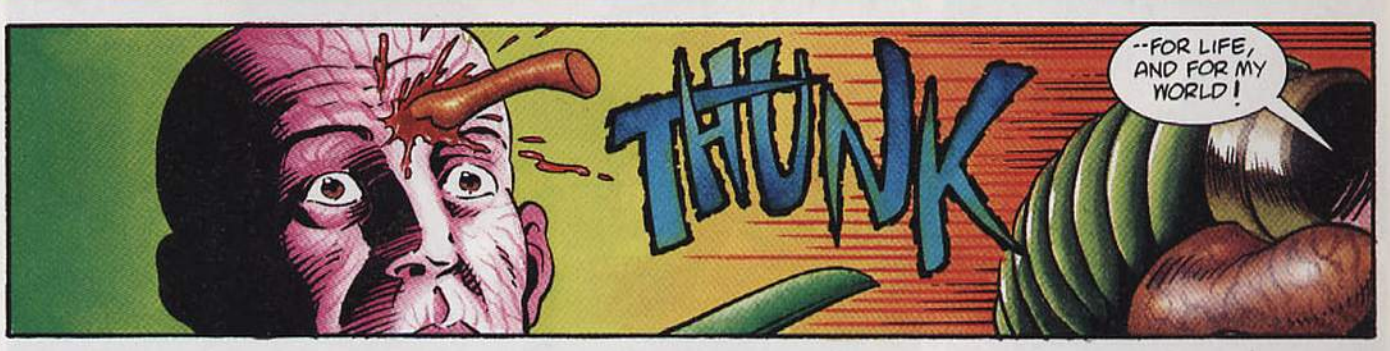
TO MY ANTRUM, ZOMS. I INTEND TO TAKE MY TIME FLAYSTRIPPING HIM!
SORRY, SUE.

I'VE GOT FRIENDS WHO NEED ME.

I'VE COME TOO FAR TO GIVE UP NOW!

WHILE THERE'S BREATH IN ME--

--I'LL CONTINUE TO FIGHT--


THUNK
--FOR LIFE, AND FOR MY WORLD!

OHHHH, LORCA. IT WAS EVER THE *WARRIOR* IN YOU THAT INSPIRED SUCH MAD LUST IN ME.
I WAS *HOPING* YOU'D TRY SOMETHING. I'D WANTED TO TAKE MY TIME DISPOSING OF YOU, MAKING YOU SUFFER SLOWLY...

BUT WHAT ULTIMATE *PLEASURE* I CAN HAVE CONQUERING YOU IN *BATTLE*!

YOU ARE RIGHT, SUERACEEN. THIS MOMENT HAS ALWAYS BEEN OUR DESTINY.
COME THEN!

YES, LORCA!
OH, YES, MY LUST-MATE!

I AM BUT AN INSTRUMENT OF THE WILL OF THE HOLY ORG!
LET ME PRAISE AND MAGNIFY ITS GLORIOUS NAME--

--BY OFFERING IT YOUR TRAITOROUS BIOMASS IN SACRIFICE!
AAAHHHH!

YOU COULD NEVER BEST ME, LORCA!
YOU ARE WEAK!
FOOLISH EMOTION WAS ALWAYS YOUR DOWNFALL!

--HFFFFFHHH--

YOUR PRECIOUS LAYGEN SHOULD SEE YOU NOW!
AND EVEN THAT WITLESS GOSSAMER WOULD SCORN YOUR WEAKNESS IF SHE SAW YOU LIKE THIS!

ENOUGH!

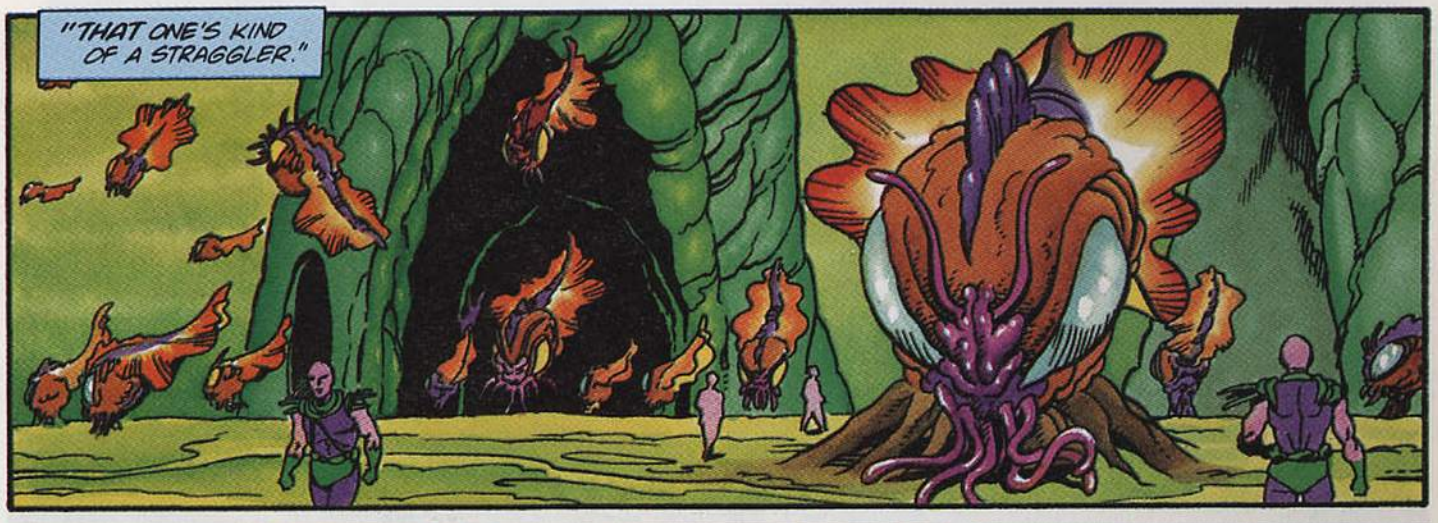
GOODBYE, SUERACEEN.
ULTIMATE PLEASURE, INDEED.

Uhhh...MY WOUNDS...ARE DEEP...BUT I MUST GO ON.
HOW IRONIC... THAT I SHALL CARRY SUERACEEN'S THIRSTY BLOODSPIKE INTO BATTLE WITH ME.

BUT SOMETHING'S WRONG--I CAN FEEL IT!
MY RAPPORT WITH THE ORG MAY NOT HAVE BEEN STRONG ENOUGH TO CONTROL IT--

BUT MY SENSES STILL REACH OUT TO TASTE THE PLANETARY CONSCIOUSNESS, AND I COULD SWEAR...
...THAT THE ORG HAS GONE TO SLEEP!

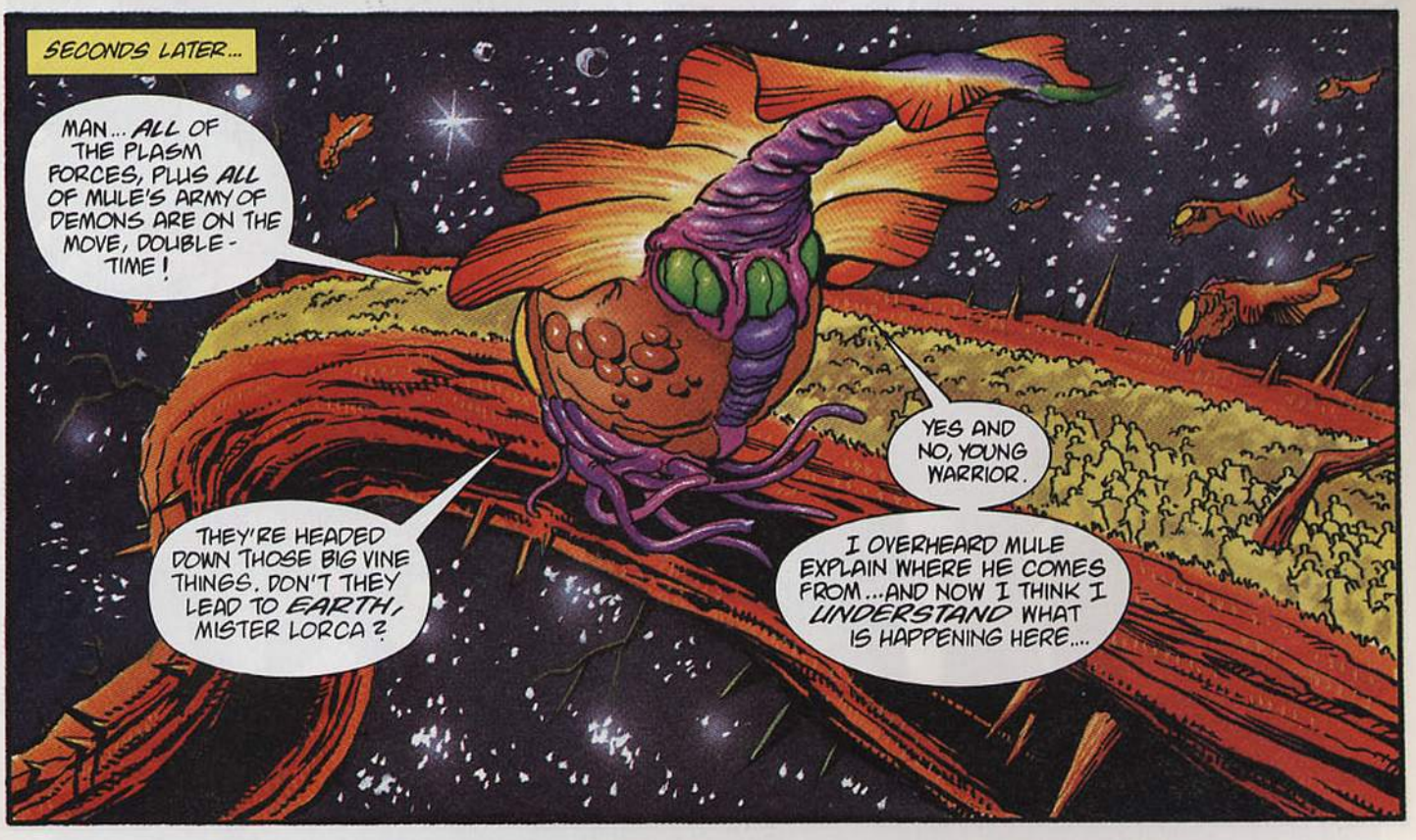
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE ...YET, THE BUILDINGS, THE GROUNDSKIN--ALL THINGS THAT HAVE NO CONSCIOUSNESS INDEPENDENT OF THE ORG--ARE SUDDENLY... DEATHLY STILL.
CAN IT BE THE ORG'S ANIMUS HAS DESERTED IT--LEAVING IT IN A TRANCE?
LORCA! WE'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR YOU! OUR CELLS JUST COLLAPSED.
THE OLD PEOPLE'S DID. US KIDS BUSTED OUT BEFORE.
YEAH. AND WE'RE READY TO FIND THAT SLIME MULE WHO SNEAK ATTACKED US.
SHORTLY...
LOOKS LIKE THE WHOLE ARMY'S LOADING INTO THOSE BIG FLYING-FISH THINGS.
I CAN HEAR THE OFFICERS TALKING--I CAN SEE AND HEAR REALLY WELL, YOU KNOW--
--BUT...I DON'T GET IT. SOMETHING ABOUT A SERPENT BEING STOLEN...AND ...THAT MULE HIMSELF IS GOING INTO BATTLE WITH THEM...
...BECAUSE WHOEVER WINS CONTROLS THE UNIVERSE.
THANK YOU, RECON. WHAT AN EXCELLENT YOUNG SEEKER YOU ARE!
GLORY, I THINK WE SHOULD FOLLOW THEM. WHERE THERE ARE ENEMIES OF MULE'S PERHAPS WE SHALL FIND ALLIES.
MAKES SENSE. WE'LL NEED TRANSPORTATION.
RECON, DEAR, SEE IF YOU CAN PICK OUT THE SHIP THAT WOULD BE EASIEST FOR US TO, um...BORROW.
WE'RE GOING IN ONE OF THOSE? WOW.

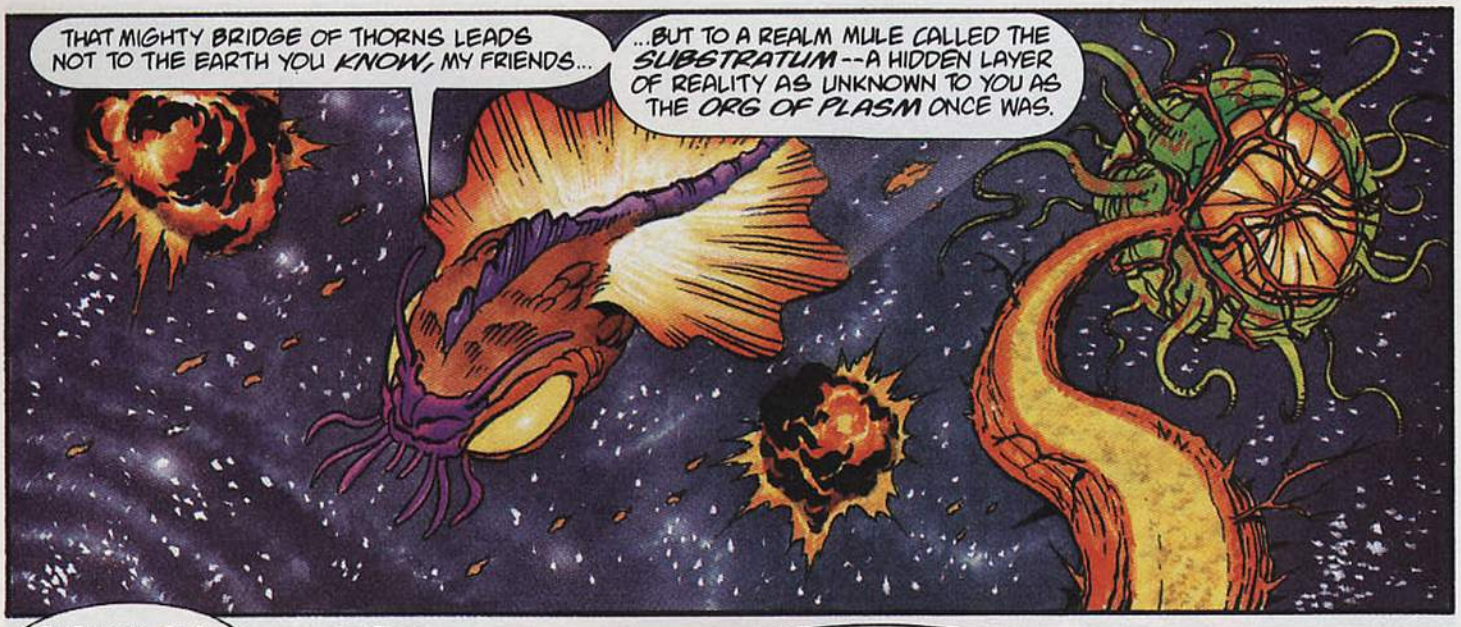

"THAT ONE'S KIND OF A STRAGGLER."

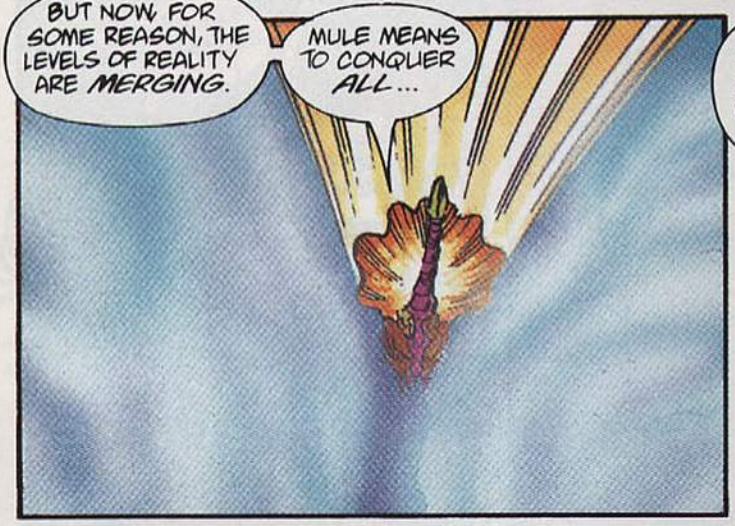
MOVE IT! THE FLOTILLA'S MOVING OUT WITHOUT US!
WE'RE COMING!
FIGHTING AGAIN, ALREADY...! WE'VE BARELY HAD TIME TO FEED OUR GUNS!

YEAHHH!

NICE SHOT, MARTIN.
THANKS, GLORY.
I CAN HOLD 'EM OFF WITH FIREBALLS!
VERY NICE, SPELLCASTER!


SECONDS LATER...
MAN... ALL OF THE PLASM FORCES, PLUS ALL OF MULE'S ARMY OF DEMONS ARE ON THE MOVE, DOUBLE-TIME!
THEY'RE HEADED DOWN THOSE BIG VINE THINGS. DON'T THEY LEAD TO EARTH, MISTER LORCA?
YES AND NO, YOUNG WARRIOR.
I OVERHEARD MULE EXPLAIN WHERE HE COMES FROM...AND NOW I THINK I UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE....


THAT MIGHTY BRIDGE OF THORNS LEADS NOT TO THE EARTH YOU KNOW, MY FRIENDS...
...BUT TO A REALM MULE CALLED THE SUBSTRATUM--A HIDDEN LAYER OF REALITY AS UNKNOWN TO YOU AS THE ORG OF PLASM ONCE WAS.


BUT NOW, FOR SOME REASON, THE LEVELS OF REALITY ARE MERGING.
MULE MEANS TO CONQUER ALL...

...BUT OTHERS BESIDES US MUST OPPOSE HIM... AND IF WE FOLLOW THE SHIPS THAT ARE SHUTTLING TROOPS FROM THE VINE-BRIDGE...
...WE'LL FIND THEM.

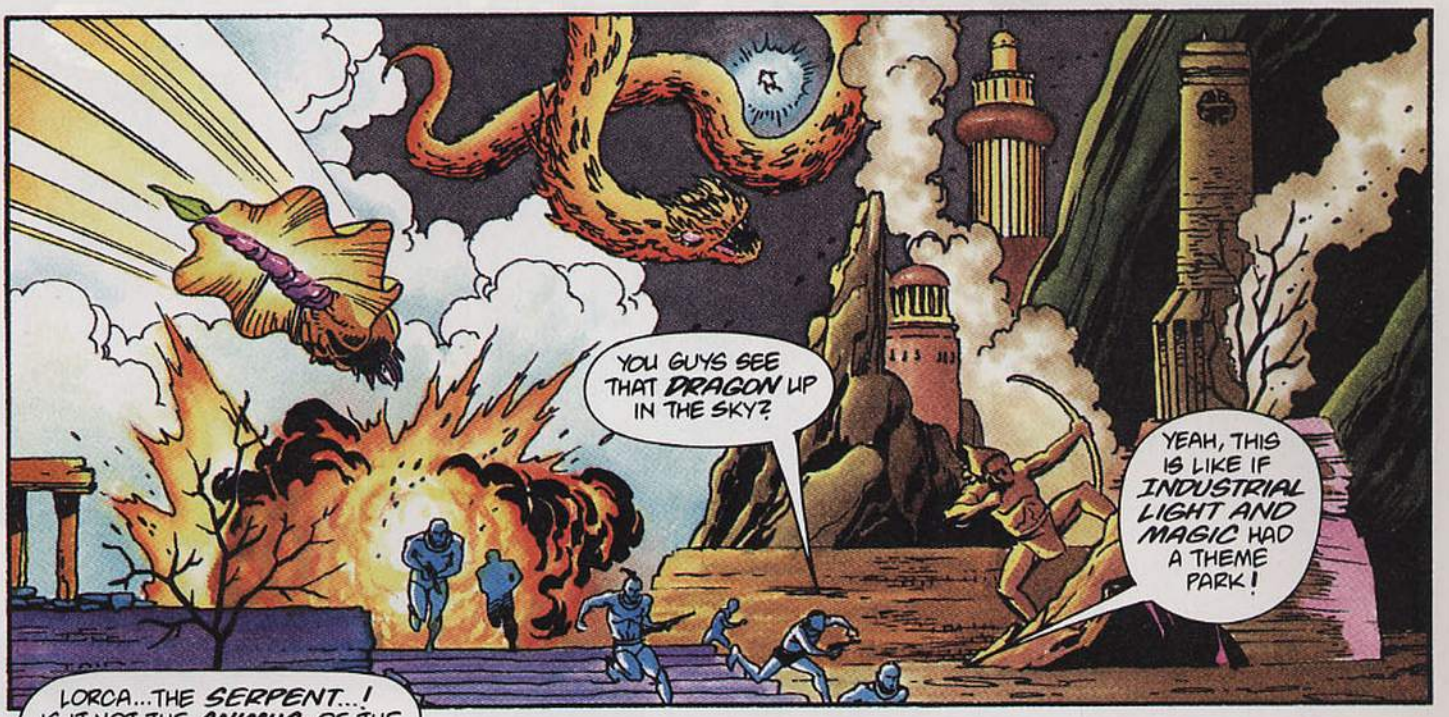
THERE!
A CITY... ISOLATED IN AN OUT-OF-THE-WAY REGION OF THIS SUBSTRATUM, HIDDEN BY MISTS...
...AND UNDER SIEGE!

RECON, WHY DON'T YOU SCOUT AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN FIND OUT?
I'M GOING TO JUMP DOWN AND HAVE A LOOK AROUND.
ME TOO! GERONIMO!
HEY, FRONT! WAIT TILL GLORY TELLS YOU, DWEEB! WHAT IF YOU GET HURT?

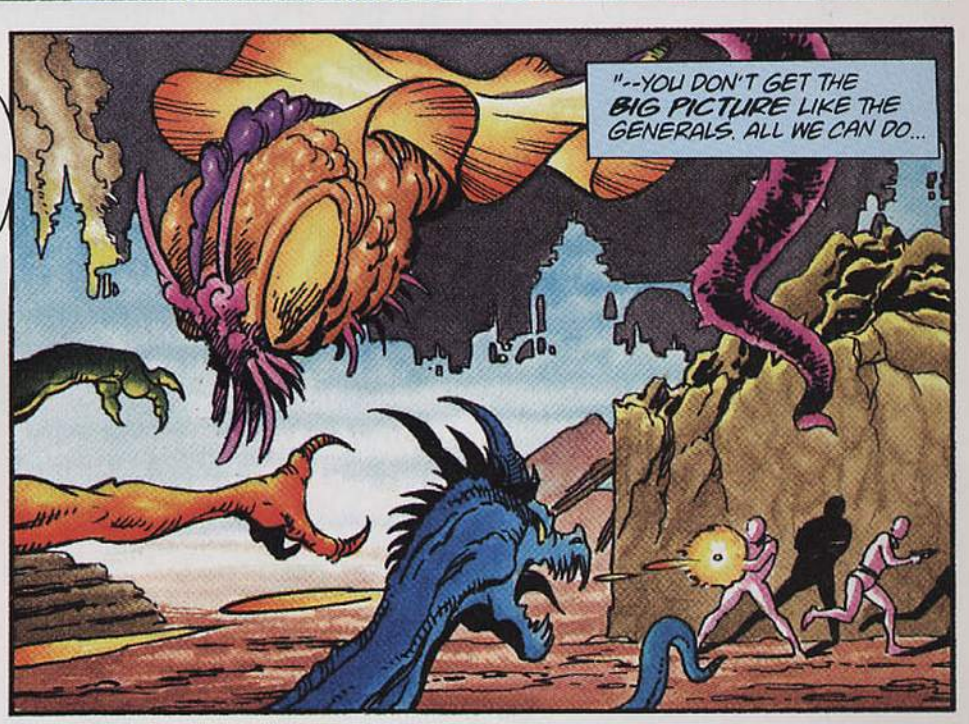
NAH. MY ARMOR'LL PROTECT ME. I THINK.
WOW! CLIVE BARKER'S GOT NOTHIN' ON THOSE THINGS!

GOOD SHIP, PLEASE LAND IN THAT CLEARING!

REVEREND GILBERT, GO AND HELP GLORY. I WILL FOLLOW...IN A MOMENT.
GOSSAMER... STAY HERE. YOU'LL BE SAFER. THIS IS NOT YOUR FIGHT.
YOU SHOULD STAY HERE, LORCA. I SAW YOU USING SOME STRANGE... LEECHES TO KNIT YOUR WOUNDS, BUT YOU ARE FAR FROM HEALED.
I AM AN EMPATH. I SENSE THAT THE OUTCOME OF THIS BATTLE CONCERNS ALL WHO LIVE...
...AND AS LONG AS YOU FIGHT FOR THE SIDE I DEEM RIGHT, I AM WITH YOU.


YOU GUYS SEE THAT DRAGON UP IN THE SKY?
YEAH, THIS IS LIKE IF INDUSTRIAL LIGHT AND MAGIC HAD A THEME PARK!

LORCA...THE SERPENT...! IS IT NOT...THE ANIMUS OF THE ORG GIVEN SUBSTANCE?
YES. SOMEONE IS USING IT AS A PAWN IN THIS BATTLE! MULE, I SUPPOSE, BUT...BUT HOW?
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH BEING AMONG THE FOOT-SOLDIERS IN A WAR--


"--YOU DON'T GET THE BIG PICTURE LIKE THE GENERALS. ALL WE CAN DO...

"...IS FIGHT LIKE THE DEVIL--LORD FORGIVE ME--AGAINST THE ONES WE KNOW ARE ENEMIES!"

BUT, THERE ARE SO MANY, REVEREND GILBERT...!
AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH... NOTHING SCARES ME ANYMORE.
JUST STAND BACK...

YOU KNOW, I THINK THEY'VE FIGURED OUT THAT IT'S *US* HERE. THEY'RE COMING AT US LIKE A *TIDAL WAVE*.
PERFECT.
LOTS OF LIGHT AND ENERGY AROUND THAT I CAN GATHER UP. LORD FORGIVE ME FOR WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO...
WAIT FOR ME, MARTIN. WE'LL DO IT *TOGETHER*.
JUST GIVE ME A SECOND TO GET *UNDER* THIS THING....
WOWWW.

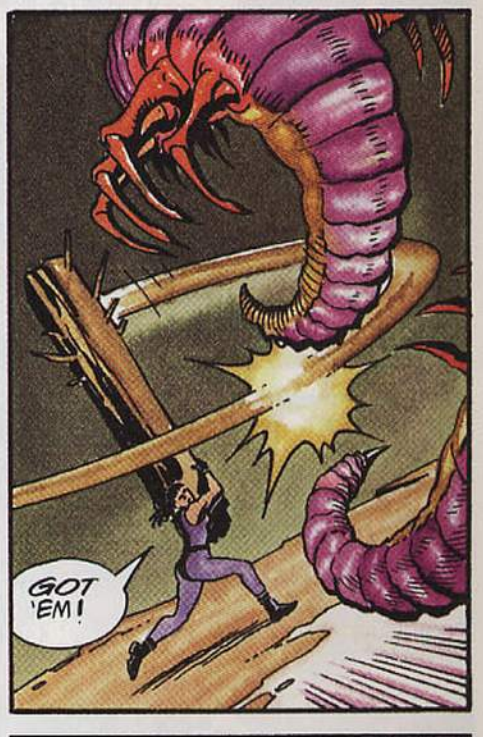
SKRAG, DUCK!
YI-I!

WHOH...

UNNHH...
HRRRAH... KKKK!

HUHHH...!
IT'S WAR, SON.
I... KILLED IT.

FLEX! TWO OF THOSE BUG-TANK THINGS...! TO YOUR LEFT...! COMING AROUND THE ROCKS!


GOT 'EM!

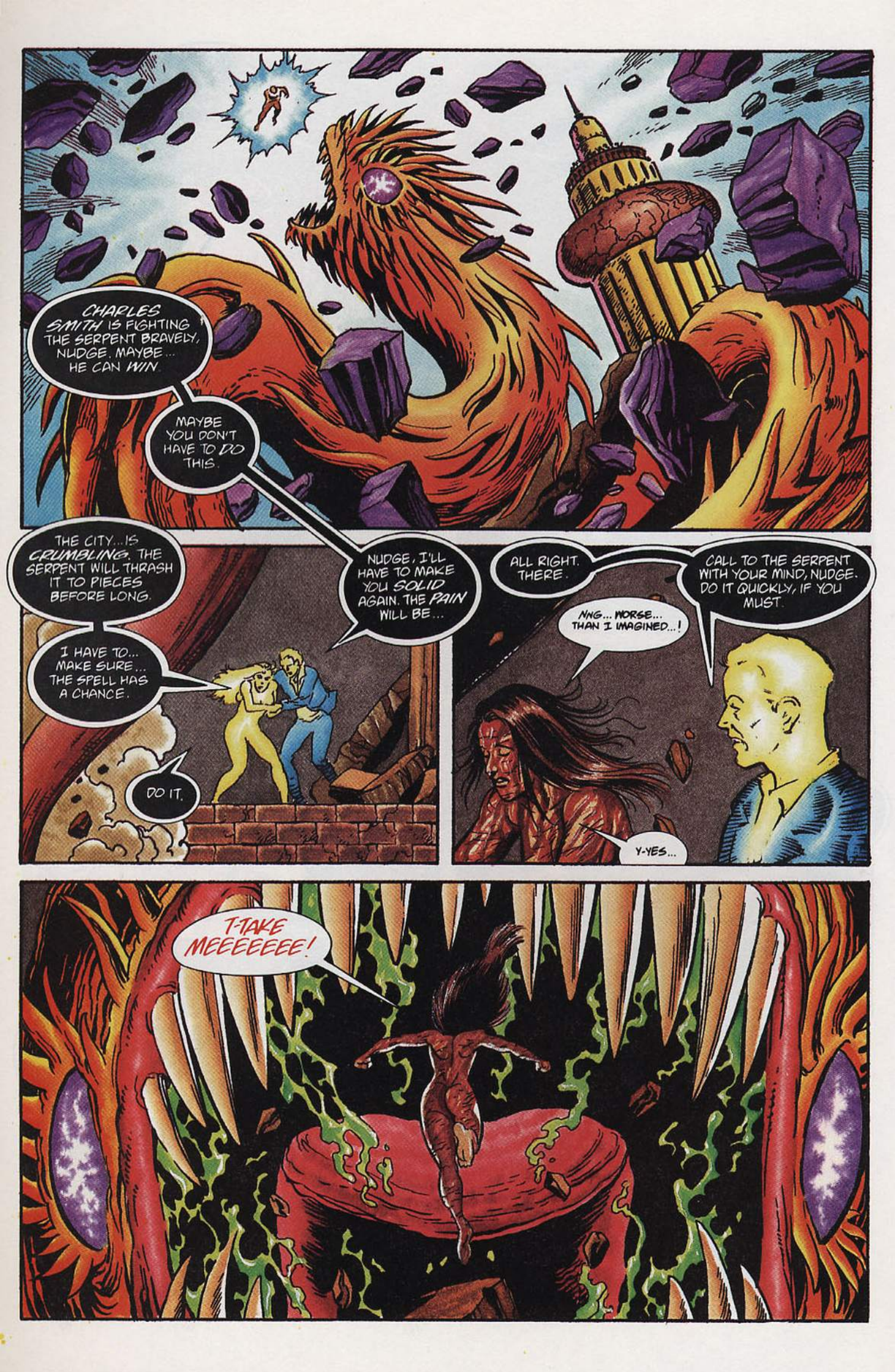
I CAN DO OTHER SPELLS BESIDES FIREBALLS AND SHIELDS, BUT I JUST CAN'T THINK OF ANY SOMETIMES.
YOU'RE DOING FINE, SPELLCASTER!

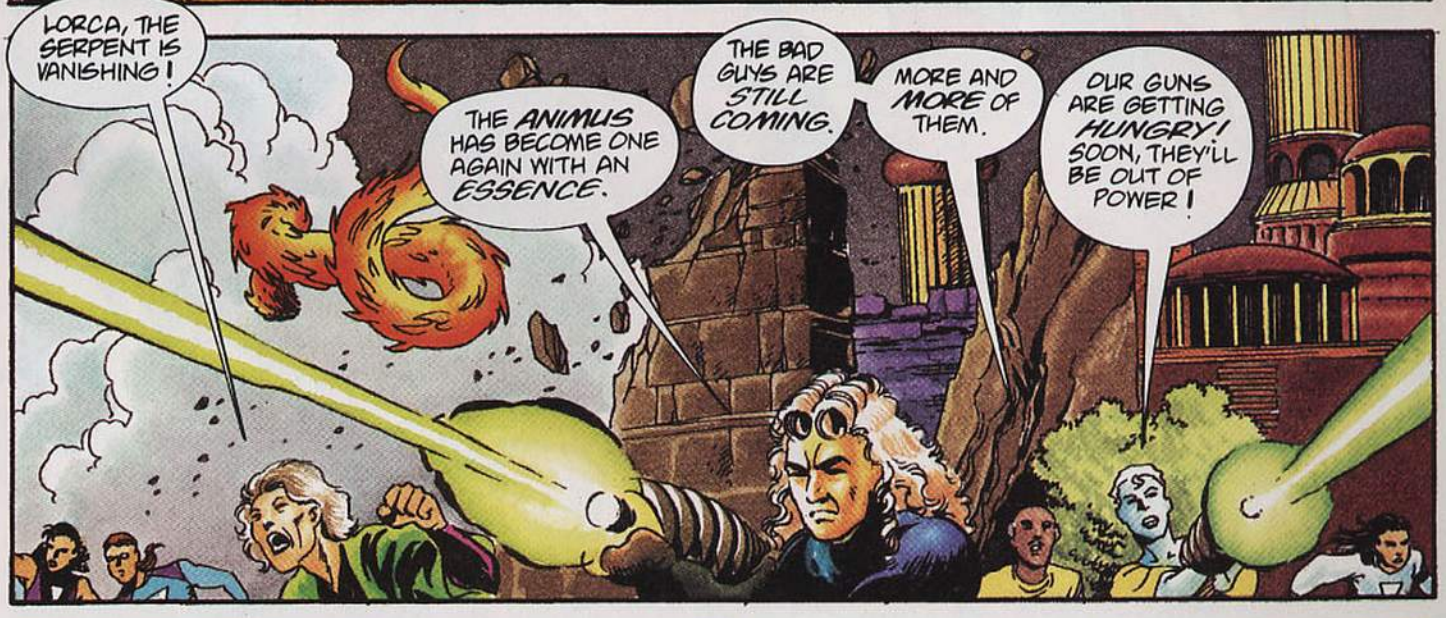
WATCH THIS, FRONT!

COOL. I MEAN...HOT, HEATER. HEY, I SAW THE TORCH DO THAT IN THE F.F. ONCE.
YEAH!

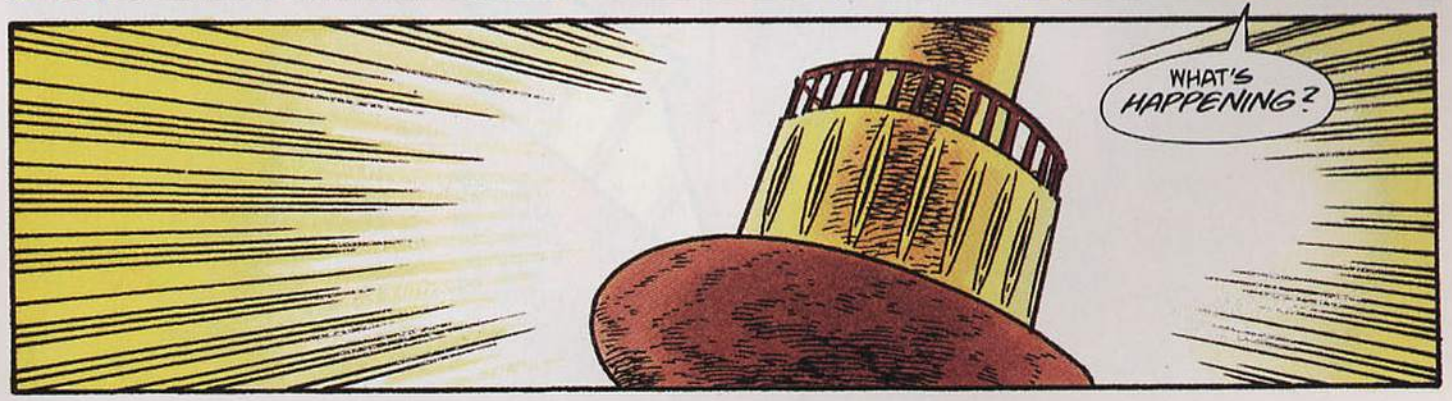
KEEP PLUGGING, EVERYONE! WE HAVE TO BE EVEN MORE STUBBORN THAN THEY ARE!
ORG'S GRACE...! IT'S NUDGE!
NUDGE! MICHAEL!
H...HELLO ...MRS. J.
NUDGE, DARLING, I THOUGHT I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN! BUT ...WHAT...WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?
SHE'S BADLY HURT MRS. JOHNSON. I'VE BROUGHT HER INTO AN ENERGY STATE TO LESSEN HER PAIN.
IT WAS AWFUL, MRS. J...
...BUT I BROUGHT IT ON MYSELF. THIS IS ALL MY FAULT. EVERYTHING.
I STOLE THE SOUL OF THE ORG. YOU SEE... I TOUCHED IT ONCE...AND IT FELT SO LONELY.
IT JUST OVERWHELMED ME...AND I WANTED TO MAKE IT HAPPY. IT OVERWHELMED ME...
DARLING, EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT. WE'LL PUT EVERYTHING RIGHT, AND YOU'LL BE FINE, AND...
NO, MRS. J., NO...
SOMETHING BAD IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD...THE WHOLE UNIVERSE. JUST LOOK AT HOW WEIRD AND MESSED UP EVERYTHING IS...

SOME PEOPLE IN THIS CITY ARE TRYING TO FIX IT... BY A MAGIC SPELL.
MAGIC SPELL. FUNNY ...ONCE WE WOULD HAVE ALL LAUGHED AT THE IDEA OF A MAGIC SPELL, HUH?
MULE AND OTHER EVIL THINGS WANT THERE TO BE CHAOS. THEY'RE TRYING TO STOP THE SPELL.
ONE OF THEM MUST HAVE CONJURED THE SERPENT.
EVER SINCE I TOOK AWAY THE SOUL OF THE ORG, THAT OLD SNAKE HAS BEEN CAUSING A LOT OF TROUBLE.
ALL MY FAULT. I... NEVER IMAGINED ...THE HARM I WAS CAUSING.
THEY CAN'T HOLD THE SERPENT OFF FOR LONG. NO ONE CAN. IT'LL DESTROY THE SPELL...UNLESS...
WELL... I CAN'T GIVE IT BACK THE SOUL I TOOK...
...BUT MAYBE... IT'LL TAKE MINE INSTEAD.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? NUDGE...?
GOOD-BYE, MRS. J. I LOVE YOU.
OH, MARTIN...! WHAT IS SHE DOING?
I DON'T KNOW, LOUISE...BUT GOD GO WITH HER.
SACRIFICE. THE SERPENT REQUIRES A SACRIFICE.
THIS BATTLE IS NOT YET OVER. NUDGE'S SACRIFICE MUSTN'T BE IN VAIN.
HERE THEY COME AGAIN!
GET 'EM!

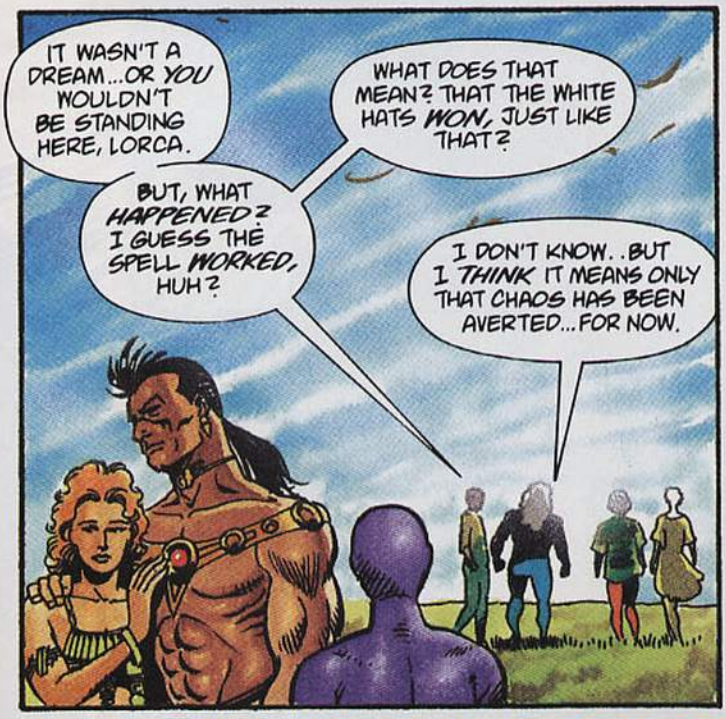

CHARLES SMITH IS FIGHTING THE SERPENT BRAVELY, NUDGE. MAYBE... HE CAN WIN.
MAYBE YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS.
THE CITY...IS CRUMBLING. THE SERPENT WILL THRASH IT TO PIECES BEFORE LONG.
NUDGE, I'LL HAVE TO MAKE YOU SOLID AGAIN. THE PAIN WILL BE...
I HAVE TO... MAKE SURE... THE SPELL HAS A CHANCE.
DO IT.
ALL RIGHT. THERE.
CALL TO THE SERPENT WITH YOUR MIND, NUDGE. DO IT QUICKLY, IF YOU MUST.
NNG... WORSE... THAN I IMAGINED...!
Y-YES...
T-TAKE MEEEEEEE!


LORCA, THE SERPENT IS VANISHING!
THE ANIMUS HAS BECOME ONE AGAIN WITH AN ESSENCE.
THE BAD GUYS ARE STILL COMING.
MORE AND MORE OF THEM.
OUR GUNS ARE GETTING HUNGRY! SOON, THEY'LL BE OUT OF POWER!

WHAT...?
LIGHT... FROM THAT TOWER!


WHAT'S HAPPENING?

THE SPELL...!



NEXT: THE BEGINNING OF A **NEW ERA** FOR **WARRIORS OF PLASM** AND THE WHOLE **DEFIANT** UNIVERSE AS EMPEROR-IN-EXILE LORCA MEETS PRESIDENT CLINTON!